

Executive Committee for Highway Safety
Keeping Drivers Alert
Working Group Meeting Minutes – Mtg. #6
November 17, 2004

Location:

UNC HSRC, Chapel Hill @ 10:00 a.m.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Doug Robertson	Tom Crosby	Don Ferrier	Jane Stutts
Ben Zarzaur	Joe Geigle	Ashley Memory	Jessica Jones
Katie Jones	Cliff Braam		

Scribe:

Cliff Braam

Minutes:

- The meeting began at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Open Meeting

Doug welcomed everyone back and thanked them for coming to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves since we had a few new people present.

Task I – Review Progress

- Doug briefed the group on the last Executive Committee for Highway Safety (ECHS) meeting.

Task II – Review Top Strategy

At the last meeting, the group had finished developing the strategy “**Conduct Education and Awareness Campaigns to Increase Younger Driver’s Awareness of the Risks of Driver Distractions**”. This strategy is focused on educating young drivers and teens who are approaching the driving age of the risks involved with distracted driving.

After the last meeting, Doug and Katie met with Ashley and Jessica to discuss the possible different approaches for public relations campaigns related to this strategy. Jessica and Katie presented to the group their findings.

Executive Committee For Highway Safety Distracted Drivers Campaign
Findings And Proposed Action Items

WHO: “Echo Boomers,” specifically ages 13-16-year-olds

In 2003:

- represented nearly one-third of the U.S. population
- 7,884 of drivers 15-to-20-years-old were involved in fatal crashes (average of 21 crashes a day)
- 46 percent of these drivers involved in fatal crashes were killed
- driver fatalities for this age group has increased 13 percent since 1993
- Echo Boomer’s accounted for 18 percent of all the drivers involved in police-reported crashes
- drivers in this age group are four times more likely to be involved in distraction related crashes
- motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people from 15 to 20 years old
- in 2002 N.C. experienced 21,082 distraction-related crashes with 263 being fatal, and drivers 16-21 accounting for 14 percent of the total
- in 2000 almost 14 percent of N.C.’s population was between the ages of 10 and 19
- majority of this age group is now at the driving age or eligible to enroll in driver’s education classes

Our secondary audience will include parents of Echo Boomers, coaches, teachers and specifically driver’s education teachers who interact with teenagers on a regular basis.

It is easier to stop a habit before it starts. (it takes 21 days to form a habit)

Possible partnering agencies include: DMV, N.C. High School Athletic Association, Mothers/Students Against Drunk Driving, Church Youth Groups, N.C. Public Schools, Public Relations Student Society university chapters

WHAT: Public Relations Campaign

Public Relations:

- is generally more effective than advertising
- is a less pricey option
- creates a “buzz”

- may include news stories, press releases, special events, educational materials, web sites, use of the internet, focus groups, promotional materials, and public service announcements

SPECIAL NOTE : Research notes that 82% of Echo Boomers are skeptical of the media and advertising, (Yankelovich) therefore word of mouth and “buzz” is the best way to effectively reach them. POSITIVE NOTE: Teenagers indicated that they trust and have a high level of confidence in the government. (N.C. Civic Education Consortium)

PRELIMINARY IDEAS/NEXT STEPS:

- establish a positive campaign message, many times teenagers are told “don’t do this, you can’t do that” but a positive message is more likely to be openly received by them
- slogan ideas that capitalize on “concentration” or the idea of keeping “both hands on the wheel” (this is already taught in driver’s education classes now)
- student involvement from focus groups to determine what they are receptive to and what they like or want in a campaign
- school involvement, on all levels of education, students love to correct their parents so if they learn that distracted driving is wrong at an early age they may say “hey mom don’t talk on your cell phone while you are driving it is dangerous”
- students in higher levels of education could possibly come up with a short commercial about distracted driving and we could sponsor a commercial competition and have the winning commercial possibly be aired on tv and in local high schools, this may produce an outstanding teen to be a spokesperson
- may also get university public relations organizations involved in campaign ideas and execution

Next Katie gave the group a review of a web site that she had found (www.roadreadyteens.org). This is an interactive web site that targets teen drivers and one that NC may be able to use as a model as a potential resource to reach our intended target audience. A survey of teens who have used this site showed very favorable responses to the content and message of the site.

Other discussions concerning this strategy were as follows:

Name	Item
Doug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need to narrow the target age group to the younger teens who have not gotten their license yet. There would be an added incentive (license acquisition) for these individuals to comply. This could also have a spin off effect on the parents too.

Cliff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to review the Driver's Education curriculum in regards to what is being taught and who is held accountable. This is also an issue that has been mentioned by several other working groups (Seat Belt and Lane Departure) and the lane departure working group will be drafting a strategy for this topic. I would suggest that a technical working group be pulled together with representation from these three working groups to draft the strategy.
Ashley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to focus on positive messages such as "What to do".
Tom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We may need to have different messages for kids from the city and those from the county as these will likely face different issues.
Ashley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Or possibly have a cross section of the two groups.
Jane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utah has done a lot with this subject with a group called MED1 and the Utah DOT. They may be a good source of information.
Don	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Instruction need to modernize what they do.
Jane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We may need to look into getting on the agenda for the conference that is held for drivers education instructors in the state.
Don	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMV's test bank of questions may need to be revamped to include questions on topics such as cell phone use, drowsy driving, etc.

Task III – Discussion of Next Strategy

Tom had drafted a strategy targeting drowsy young drivers and copies were distributed to the group. Since these two strategies are very similar in nature, the group discussed whether to keep these separate or to combine them.

The final outcome of these discussions was that we would have two strategies as follows:

Strategy 1 – Combined campaign for young people (ages 13-18) on distracted and drowsy driving.

Strategy 2 – Will focus on the issue of drowsy driving for the ages of 18 and over.

Joe and Tom will revise the strategies accordingly.

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Action Items:

Name	Item
Joe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the lead on Strategy #1 and revise the draft strategy accordingly.
Tom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the lead on Strategy #2 and revise the draft strategy accordingly.

Don	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the licensing process and test questions to see if changes are needed.
Ben	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Dr. Garrison and coordinate with him the ideas that he had concerning how we teach young drivers how to deal with distractions.
Cliff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact GHSP and get information on the Teen Traffic Safety Groups that they used to coordinate.
Jane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check to see if there are modules in the current driver's education curriculum on driver distraction.

The above items are to be completed and the information distributed to the group by December 3, 2004.

NEXT MEETING: December 20, 2004; 12:00 – 3:00 at UNC HSR